

EQUITY IN HEALTH IS NOT THE SAME AS EQUALITY

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Abstract

Introduction: Equity in health implies that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and, more pragmatically, that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this potential, if it can be avoided. Equity is therefore concerned with creating equal opportunities for health and with Bringing health differentials down to the lowest level possible. Although equity theory has dominated the conception of justice in organizational relations, equality also shapes justice expectations and behaviors.

Methods: For this study, original and review articles from data bases, such as Pub Med, Science Direct were used.

Results: There is a common misconception that equity and equality mean the same thing — and that they can be used interchangeably, especially when talking about health. But the truth is they do not — and cannot. The two words are similar, but the difference between them is crucial. Not all health disparities are unfair. For example, we expect young adults to be healthier than the elderly population. Female newborns tend to have lower birth weights on average than male newborns. Men have prostate problems, while women do not. It would be difficult, however, to argue that any of these health inequalities is unfair. However, differences in nutritional status or immunization levels between girls and boys, or racial/ethnic differences in the likelihood of receiving appropriate treatment for a heart attack, would be causes for grave concern from an equity perspective

Conclusion: The concept of equity is inherently normative—that is, value based while equality is not necessarily so Often, the term health inequalities is used as a synonym for health inequities, perhaps because inequity can have an accusatory, judgmental, or morally charged tone. However, it is important to recognize that, strictly speaking, these terms are not synonymous. The concept of health equity focuses attention on the distribution of resources and other processes that drive a particular kind of health inequality—that is, a systematic inequality in health (or in its social determinants) between more and less advantaged social groups, in other words, a health inequality that is unjust or unfair.

Keywords: Equity; Health; Equality.